

Introduction Prof. Bob “Bobasan” Karnes History

I borrowed some stories from my book and Manuals page on www.bobasan.net

Only through the traditional teacher - student relationship can the essence and subtleties of many martial art systems be transmitted. The goal of this writing is to put some of the oral history and object lessons in writing so that our newer martial art instructors may benefit and know more of our Ryu's history. I have included stories about my journey through the system. I have included stories about the practical application of our martial art in the security and in the mental health workplace.

My journey begins

How my personality and temperament was formed

My earliest memories in grade school in the 1960's was being smaller and younger than the rest of the boys. My mother admitted me to school a year early as my birthday was in October. This kept her hyperactive into everything boy from climbing the trees getting on the roof or locking older brother in the cupboard for at least during the week. This seemed to set the pattern through to high school as the little big mouth smart ass kid. It seems that I felt too small and not smart enough to get positive attention, so I mostly tried to stay out of the main mix and not get into conflict with my parents or teachers. To be ignored was better than to be in trouble.

Living in the violent times and uprisings 1960's

My early life experience was mostly mixed in with the violence around me while not directly affecting me. At 6 years old, in 1962, I remember the Cuban Missile crisis. I also remember in grade school doing duck and cover drills under our desks in case of nuclear attack.

In 1963 the assassination President Kennedy shook up the older people around me and I had the feeling that something important and hopeful was lost.

In 1965 the Watts riots were blocks away from us while we lived in the city of South Gate, California. It snowed ash from the fires at our apartment complex. I remember seeing a neighbor sitting on his front porch cleaning his shotgun.

The Vietnam war was on the nightly news channel every weeknight. Along with other kids my age it seemed that our life was decided by where you were born in the world and if you were lucky, you could avoid being directly affected by the uncertainty and crazy times that we were living through. I lived in comfort and was sheltered from these times in a safe white bubble, still realizing that the world was a violent place.

Black and white TV and the hope from Liverpool

The music on the pop Los Angeles radio was upbeat. The Ed Sullivan show was positive. Then I saw the Beatles on the TV and that was my way out from the pain and violence of the adult world. I mentally blocked out the rest of the 1960's and used music and started drawing to soothe my nerves and to boost my spirits.

First alpha male peer

His name was Ralph Rocco. Ralph's dad was a US Marine. Ralph looked like a small Charles Bronson and Ralph exuded confidence. Ralph lived next door to us and I hung out with him while living in the City of South Gate in southern California USA.

First (and only) grade school fight “ground and pound”

On the school yard I said some smart-ass comment to a red-haired kid. The next day his friend grabbed me in a full nelson pinning my arms from behind. The red-haired kid was in front of me as he said, “You started it and I’m finishing it”! With that statement he punched me in the nose. This was different! I went to Ralph to see what I should do and he coached me to be tough and not to take shit from anyone! The next time I saw the red-haired kid I told him to fight me after school in a vacant lot. There were many kids there and I took the kid down to his back while pinning his arms to the ground with my knees. I punched him in the face over and over. I won! A week or so later a very confident red-haired kid must have had some fighting tips. He said, “lets fight I am gonna beat you up this time”! I remember making up some excuse and making a hurried cowardly retreat. I was no Ralph Rocco.

Cowboy throw - Tomoe Nage- circle throw

I was still in grade school and when wrestling around with a friend in his back yard I somehow remembered the “cowboy throw” from watching cowboy shows on TV with my dad. I put my foot in my friend’s stomach, fell to my back and flipped him over by head to his back. Luckily, he only got the wind knocked out of himself. I felt then as I do now it was a dangerous stupid thing to do. After that he was no longer my friend. Our lives would have changed forever if he had landed on his head.

Wrestling half nelson trick on big brother... the smaller overcoming the stronger

Outweighing me by 100 lbs my older big brother was also a Vietnam vet and now an Orange County Sheriff. While he was visiting us in Reno we were wrestling around in the living room on the floor in front of mom. He put me into a half-nelson hold from the rear as I was on my hands and knees. My next move was a reflex that came from the only junior high school wrestling class that I attended. The counter is to squeeze your captured arm into your body then to tuck your head and roll forward to your back. This move flipped my brother over onto his back with me, the little skinny kid on top of him. My mom laughed and luckily so did my big brother. She said my eyes were wide open in fear and surprise by what I just did to my big brother and what may happen next!

High School

For me high school was about avoiding conflict with bigger kids and doing as little schoolwork as possible. Girls were a mystery to me as I had no idea as to who I was. I did OK if I followed my mother’s wise advice to “just be nice”. I was very inexperienced, and I regret the thoughtless harm to the girls and later the lady’s feelings that I caused.

In 1971 I had a girlfriend who took me to a house to be introduced to a group of people who called themselves “the family”. They were members of a mail order religious degree factory and they fancied themselves as a metaphysical church who did meditations and rituals to gain psychic power and hidden knowledge. They thought that they were psychic warriors in a hippy commune. This was different! I did not go back. They were former members of a martial art school.

My First time at a Martial art school

I first visited the Sparks Judo and Jujitsu school (now the Bushidokan Martial Arts Temple) in 1972 or so with the same high school girlfriend. I was outside looking at this old two story red wooden building with Japanese style lettering on it. As we walked upstairs, I saw glowing planets and stars hanging from the black light lit ceiling in the stairway. On the mat there were two groups of people. It was in between class time and two students were doing hand escape arts, two others were throwing each other, and one person was sitting on the mat writing in a notebook. The single student that caught my attention was the person writing in the notebook. I thought this must be a special Martial Art that was worth taking notes for. The school at that time was hard core Judo and Jujitsu with metaphysical study as well as studies in older traditional healing arts. 10 years later I would begin my martial arts studies.

Back to southern California and the Bob Spreen Cadillac days

To complete my last year of high school I returned to live with my father's new family and join the fast-paced world of southern California in the 1970's. While still living in South Gate with my stepbrother and sisters we used their grandma's address to attend the safer schools in Downey, California. Downey high school was great for my 12th grade year. I was not tough enough or street wise enough to survive in the school system where I lived so this was a safe place to finish high school. From 1972 till 1980 I worked at a Cadillac dealership with many other family members. I had a blast driving for a living or washing cars in the California sunshine. After the family business was sold to a corporation they downsized and gutted the class out of the car agency. I no longer had the feeling privilege of working there. I tried living with a relative and see if there was any other work I could get in LA.

Oriental influence and Living with Uncle Charles before the move back to Reno

Uncle Charles was the oddball loner in the family. He was a grumpy guy who argued with the news on TV. He painted houses when he needed to make a few bucks for food and beer. Charles lived in an old garage with a hanging garbage can fireplace. He lived on the property behind great grandma's house. Charles was a vet from WWII in Guam, I think. He used the GI bill and went to take some college classes when he discovered the oriental culture of Japan and China. He spent hours practicing a single sumi brush stroke on stacks of old newspaper. His "house" had a large black ink painting of a traveling monk that he painted with quick minimal strokes. He had a bamboo Zen Garden outside his sliding shoji rear wall to his back yard. He had simple furniture and a bookshelf with one natural dark knotty branch that looked like it grew there on one end holding the shelf up. He lived and ate simply. In the sparsely lit room, he told me about the art and philosophy of Zen. I loved how art and philosophy were joined together. I was in transition to make my move back to Reno, but this experience prepared me in many ways. While deciding my future It seemed that the difference between a 9 to 5 job like my dad and the simple artistic life of Charles needed some consideration.

Mental Health Job

How my job with mental health started

When I moved back to Reno, Nevada in 1980 my 1972 Chevy Impala with all my possessions caught fire. I was starting over at the age of 24, living back at home with my mom with the clothes on my back and a lightly burnt up acoustic guitar.

I found a job at a warehouse for a minimum wage. I heard of CETA, a state job placement office. I went to apply, and the lady told me that my mom made too much money for me to qualify for job placement assistance. When she told me that she could not help me she slipped me a piece of paper with the number of the charge nurse at the geriatric state psychiatric unit. After a job interview RN Judy Grayer encouraged me to apply. Back then there was only a high school graduation requirement for a Mental Health Technician position. My motive was the financial security and the stability of a state job.

Beginning my life as a Mental Health Technician in the Geriatrics unit Sparks, Nevada

I was following my mother's practical advice and found a state job with benefits. The locked geriatric mental health unit was small with 15 or so patients and 4 staff members per day shift. I was exposed to different types of mental illness gradually. What was needed as a staff member was gentleness with calm verbal de-escalation skills. We needed self-awareness so as not to get bitten, hit or your eyes gouged. The patients were confused, and they could become angry or frightened at any moment. You were also responsible for taking care of their physical needs like toileting, dressing and bathing adult patients with different cognitive challenges.

I learned from these patients that at any time anyone can become dependent on the gentleness of others. Be it mental illness, a disease, old age, or a car wreck this could happen to anyone. How would you want your mother or brother treated? This was the question the psych nurses would ask us. This kept us ethical when we were becoming frustrated as mental health workers.

After a month at work, I was asked to fill in for a staff member on the locked ICU adult psychiatric unit for a few hours. I was given a set of keys, and I was told to stay in the day room and that if staff were in trouble to respond to that area. The day room was just like the movie *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* with the large metal caffeinated coffee pot, ash trays on every table and the glassed-in fish bowl like nurse's station. At that time, I was only needed for a short time there but after this unit moved to a north-south winged newer building. I asked to be transferred to the adult unit about one year later.

On the unit the MHT's were the eyes, ears and muscle when needed

There was no organized training or in-service classes for this job at this time. If there was a skilled MHT available, you might follow him/her around. More often you were just given a set of keys and left it up to you to ask questions or yell for help. If you survived the first day and came back for your next shift you might have a job as a Mental Health Tech for this State facility. MHT's were responsible for the security on and off the unit. They escorted clients around to meals, to different activities and drove them to off-site recreational and to doctors' appointments. They did the cleanup of blood and other bodily fluids, take vital signs as well as assisting with nursing procedures. The MHT's sat with the clients engaging them in conversation and evaluated changes in behavior so they could notify other staff and the psych nurse if the client needed to be evaluated for medication PRN. I witnessed a lady patient that was regularly in 4-point restraints and locked in the seclusion room for up to 2 weeks until her medication was regulated. I was involved in take downs of violent acting out clients held them down for IM shots of medications restrained or just taken to time out or locked seclusion. My beginning martial art skills saved me and others many times.

An overview on what it like working on a locked adult psychiatric unit in the years 1981 to 1990
Days of tedium and boredom interrupted by days of intermittent terror.

Starting at 6am we were at the morning meeting. We were told what kind of evening the patients had, what new admissions had arrived and what special watches some patients were on. Special watches were suicide watch, assault watch and medical watch. After the report we would go on the unit and the mental health techs (MHT's) would wake up the patients escorting them into the day room while locking their bedrooms. Next was escort to breakfast in the dining room. After breakfast we would escort them to the day room for the morning meeting. In the early days we sat in big chairs in a big circle. With up to 30 patients on 8 south and 30 patients on the other unit 8 north we were doing the same thing. Up to 15 of our 30 patients were unable or unwilling to participate but this was still a good way to get the mood of the unit and to allow the higher functioning patients verbalize their requests or concerns. During the 1980's we did not have groups or head counts as we were often catching our breath in between the many verbal and physical interventions needed to keep everyone safe. The medication given at this time to the most violent or psychotic patients slowed the violence down, but the medication had bad and dangerous side effects for the long-term health of the patients. As the medication improved the over reliance of big male MHT's were replaced with smaller male and more women MHT's were hired. MHT's were encouraged to fill the large amount of time when the patients were not in recreation (RT) groups led by the licensed recreational therapist or the time the individual meetings with the treatment team or the weekly meeting with the psychiatrist. Although untrained the MHT's were encouraged to lead exercise groups, bingo and other reconsecration groups. Our heroes were the online LPN and RN nurses. We all worked together as the MHT's worked under the license of the Nurses. They were the buffer between the expectations of front office management and the reality of front-line application of the front office goals. The MHT's and the front-line Nurses were responsible for the safety of the patients and staff. This must be maintained in order to carry out patient treatment goals.

I realized that I needed training in self defense

A day or so after I started working at the mental health inst. I had forgotten about where the Sparks Judo and Jujitsu Dojo was located, but I remembered the word Jujitsu. I needed to learn self-defense to survive my violent job, so I looked it up in the newspaper and the ad for a Jujitsu class was listed. I signed up in 1982 at the Sparks Recreation center and went to my first class with Ginny Kitzke, Sensei - Ikkyu 1st Brown belt teaching DanZan Ryu a hybrid mostly Japanese martial art system created in Hawaii in the 1930's. Ginny was a former girlfriend and student of the Head of the Sparks Judo and Jujitsu School in Sparks, Nevada Herb LaGue, Sensei.

Take down class on the ICU unit

We had started one of our first take down classes in the nurse's office overseeing the day room. As we had a staff member on the ground getting ready to practice putting him in restraints a very large client picked up a very heavy chair and threw it at the plexiglass window. The chair and the window survived but the take down class was hurriedly moved to the day room to secure the violent patient. We did the class in private after that when we had enough staff coverage.

The most important mental health intervention and martial arts technique is one of peaceful resolution and mutual respect

Verbal and physical conflict resolution

As taught in our martial art school and at the mental health inst., the nonviolent verbal art of conflict resolution is the highest art. In the psychiatric hospital this is used in the early stages of crisis. By using calm confidence, situational awareness, detached compassion you can both have a better outcome. Giving better options to a frightened or angry person allows the potential attacker to make better decisions. Sometimes encouraging the person to move away to a less stimulating environment can be done. Verbal interaction is the best strategy as this allows the upset person to “save face” and practice self-control. As we know in martial arts backing an opponent into a corner creates an unnecessary a kill or be killed confrontation. If verbal de-escalation does not work physical restriction of movement is used by the care giver. This is done by compassionately modifying their instinct for survival from fear to relaxation. If there is no other option, the care giver team may need to do physical intervention escort or to do a controlled take down.

At the highest level this is accomplished with gentle but firm encouragement with the mission of conflict resolution. This is sometimes called “mutual benefit” in martial arts.

1990 to 2016 changes in the state psychiatric hospital.

When I returned to the state hospital to work part time in 2001. We then moved into a brand-new building complex. No more glassed-in nurses station sanctuary from the patient attacks. Instead, just a row of desks and two seclusion rooms in a locked area. The treatment of the patients had greatly improved with less use of the more potent psychiatric drugs and the now mandatory college level Mental Health Worker certification. The assault prevention course was standardized by then. The lawyer-state approved verbal and physical training came from our DZR school modified by one of our black belts Gary Smith and others. The less jail-like environment helped but the staff were at a great disadvantage during a crisis.

On the downside

The mental health workers deal with the same people that the jails and prisons do but the mental health workers and the front-line nurses are on their own with very little to protect themselves from. Prison guards, MP's and Police officers may use pain compliance techniques, hand cuffs, taser, baton, and other less than lethal projectiles. The rules of engagement allow the officer to escalate the use of force one step above the attacker's level of force. Mental health workers are not allowed to use these tools that were used the jails and in prisons.

In the early days the staff advocate for working conditions was the state employee union which became of no use today except at the time of a staff member being unjustly harassed or fired. A cynical view was that staff and patient safety was jeopardized by the need for added MHT's classes. The absence of the MHT's on the unit during violent situations was a continuing problem. The tradeoff was at classes used to impress the front office bosses and some well-intentioned people thinking that the need of a more professional MHT staff was needed for certification of the hospital. Was it worth the continued burn out of staff and the continued rise in staff injuries?

Stories of martial art principles used in the psychiatric hospital within hospital guidelines

Fire or water

By now I was a high-ranking Black Belt, and I was working with one nurse on a private substance abuse psychiatric unit. An angry frustrated patient walked up yelling that “You better get my lunch now”! I was concerned about the nurse’s safety and motioned for her to go into the locked office. We assured him that his food was being delivered but he continued to escalate. He moved closer to me, and I tried to stare him down to back him off. This was not me at my best or most therapeutic, but I tried it anyway. He moved away but it made him more angry and more threatening. This was like putting out a fire with more fire. I moved down the hall giving him space to calm down and to buy time for staff to arrive to help us with this patient. The patient started to charge down the hall straight at me. I changed my strategy to an art that my teacher taught. This art practiced in meditation was to project true detached compassion, care and concern. With my hands at my side palms towards him he was now very close. I was not really concerned about his physical threat to me but somehow, I knew that it would be alright. The patient suddenly started to cry and apologized for his threatening behavior. We walked together to the unit dining area, sat down, and waited for his lunch to be delivered.

The glass door psychiatric sweep

I was watching an agitated patient at the admissions building. The newly soon to be admitted patient tried to run out the door. He did not see or did know that the glass doors were locked. He bounced backwards off the doors into my arms (a rear basket hold) I did a double foot sweep (Okuri Harai) from the rear (a new variation for me) and slowly lowering him down to the ground.

Outside reaping soto gama ashtray take down

Back when on the unit hourly cigarette smoking people without cigarettes smoked discarded butts found in the big plastic ash trays. A patient was smoking a butt when I approached him while I was holding an ash tray asking him to put the cigarette butt out. He flicked the lit butt into my face and before he could follow up his attack, I closed the distance and did a gentle heel trip to the rear. He was unhurt on the ground, and I was standing still holding the un spilled ash tray.

“Even monkeys fall out of trees” a favorite saying from my Sensei when someone makes a mistake

I got caught over reacting

We were clearing the bedrooms on the locked adult ICU unit when an angry elderly man flung the heavy metal bedroom door open making a loud echoing bang! I was startled. At the time I was a new green belt in DZR. I shouted a yell and adopted a defensive martial art cat stance. My boss, a MHT4 started laughing saying “Bob! Don’t kung fu that poor man”!

Where is the war

I was the first to respond to a very agitated new admission. He was a regular frequent admission. It was late at night and the receptionist, and I were alone with the potentially violent patient. He was pacing and cursing demanding a cigarette. I gave him a cigarette and used this chance to calm him down. I did not light his cigarette as a lit cigarette is a potential weapon and this kept him preoccupied for several minutes asking himself and me for a light. He was calm as I waited for my back up to escort the patient to the inpatient unit. In the door charges the other mental health Tech. He was responding to the receptionist's frantic call for help and found the patient and I calmly looked at him. The other tech. Yelled "Where is the war" as he expected to run into a horrendous event in progress. Our patient abruptly escalated and yelled "The war? I will show you the war"! The patient attacked. Luckily the two of us mental health techs worked well together so no one was hurt while we escorted him to the inpatient unit.

Around the world

I was the only MHT monitoring the weekly AA meeting in the dining room. There were 10 patients and a volunteer at one end of the dining room. A 20-year-old who exhibited oppositional defiance disorder tendencies wanted to beat me up. I was not able to call for help, so I took him down gently and went into a hold down art in DZR called Shime or grappling. As I was confident that he did not have a weapon and I was confident that the other patients would not want to help this patient I was free to do some shime combinations going from one art to another art short of breaking him or hospital policy. I did not strike or use the wrist locks, armbars or chokes that presented themselves to me as he kept moving below me looking for a way to escape and hurt me. This secession is good practice but as he did not give up, I had to end it. In defense of myself and for the protection of others I placed him in a hold that he thought he could not get out of. This convinced him to give up and staff were alerted to assist me.

Playing tennis with my boss

My MHT supervisor named Tom invited me to play tennis with him after work. Tom was happened to have two tennis rackets and a few balls to bat around at a court near his house. As I was a new member to martial art classes and I had only been involved in a couple of take downs at work I was not prepared for what happened. Before we could hit the ball over the net a grizzled looking skinny biker pulled up on his Harley Davidson chopper. The biker started yelling and threatening Tom. Tom was up for a rumble and proceeded to drop the biker twice on his back with a double leg pick up. We were concerned because the biker had a sheathed machete on his bike. The biker accepted his whooping and left. Tom said "That was fun! What were we thinking? Let's go play tennis. Right"! This event shook me up. I did not look for trouble off the job. I found plenty at work. Street fighting or mutual combat was not part of my experience.

Introduction to martial art stories

Many of these martial art stories were repeated at the Dojos (martial art school) or were from the senior instructors when we attended other Dojos or national events. Some stories are called Kuden or oral tradition passed from Sensei to student. This is a teaching device with the desired effect of encouraging wonderment and to whet the appetites of the students to endure the training and the tough times ahead in life. These stories are often anecdotal examples. The need for these stories might be supplemented with movies like Star Wars, The Matrix and TV series like Kung Fu back in the 1970's and many books included like the ones listed in the index. If the student's highest goal is to attain a level of Senior Black Belt Instructor, they should strive to surpass their instructor in ability. In a modern martial art business and a traditional Martial Art school many compromises are needed to keep the school or business open and growing. Ethically, martial art systems must not be guilty of exaggerated claims or convenient memories over-glamorizing our teachers in our past.

It is not my intent to pass on false or exaggerated claims but to use this information to deepen our understanding and to further our knowledge. To have an advanced understanding and ability, the instructor and their students will also benefit from many other studies. Some studies that I recommend are a basic understanding of western anatomy, psychology, philosophy, oriental history and oriental philosophy as well as a basic understanding of as many other martial art systems as possible. This will help them to be a more knowledgeable student and instructor. At my martial art school western CPR, basic first aid and traditional DZR massage and resuscitation arts are required for the rank of 1st degree black belt.

Ethics and morality are a must when teaching life defending and potentially life taking martial arts. To illustrate this, I use what one of my teachers told me "Jujitsu without morality is just so much bad wrestling".

We study and teach to better ourselves, our community and to perpetuate the Ryu. We should not do this just to elevate our ego or only for financial gain.

It is our duty to make ourselves better people and to strive to make our world a better place.

Bob Karnes 2/24/2018

Martial Art stories teach tradition, history and important principles

Sometimes the best way to teach a principle to a student is found in a story. A good story will set into your mind a lesson that will last you a lifetime. Stories can be entertaining and shine a light on greatness and wonder. We had many fantastic times listening to these stories after class, at a professor's house or at major events during classes about our Martial Art history.

Student question.

Will these martial art movements ever become automatic?

These stories illustrate an answer

Prof. Estes pulled over in his car into a gas station. A man pulled up behind him and gets out of his car and attacks Prof. Estes. Prof. was surprised and the next thing that Prof. remembers was he had the attacker bent over the hood of his car with a one-handed hammer lock. In Prof's other hand he was surprised to see that he had taken off his leather belt and he was holding it above the man. Prof. said "I must have thought that the attacker had a knife, and I took my belt off to do a knife defense rope tying art on the attacker using my leather belt". Then with the belt Prof. swatted him on his butt a couple of times just because he had the belt in his hand, and he did not need to do anything lethal with it. The passenger of the attacker's car came out to help the now humbled attacker. The attacker yelled to his buddy "stop! Anyone who could do this to me is not to be messed with". Prof. let the man go. Prof. said, "I think that I had probably cut the man off in traffic to cause the attack".

Student uses the Arts

Another story from the late 1980's is from my morning classes that I taught at the Bushidokan in Sparks, Nevada. A very large gentle giant of a man called Joe was an occasional student of beginner rank. Joe came to classes for fun and to hang out with us for after class breakfast at the casino. He was a friend of our brown belt a Reno police officer named Rick. This big man had no need of self-defense arts as he was a Vietnam vet, ex police officer and the head of security at a casino on night shift. Joe would whisper to me during class "Does that wrist lock really work? Please apply it I will resist a little". Convinced that a smaller person could do this to a larger person he went back to practice gently with a beginner partner. Joe said "Bob I will never use these police wrist lock arts as I just pick the idiot up and carry him to the office or escort him out". A few classes later Joe told me "Hey! I used Katate Tori (a basic wrist lock) last night. The mouthy little guy was sitting at the bar on a stool with his back to me. The little guy tried to backhand me and I automatically did Katate Tori and he flew off the bar stool without it even moving. The little guy was shocked as got him off the floor and escorted him out".

One night in the casinos parking lot Joe faced a very dangerous situation. Joe as a supervisor and the only armed security guard and he was faced with an angry armed man. While waiting for the police to show up Joe said "I somehow knew that I could talk him down. Keeping my gun holstered but ready I was talking to him without turning my head I knew where the other security guards were like I had 360-degree awareness". Joe talked the mad down and no one was hurt.

The principles taught in these examples are done automatically without preconceived thoughts (Mushin) you will respond to how you have trained. Use of skillful and appropriate action should be used for ethical self-defense. Step outside yourself and do not take it personally. Allow the technique fit the situation. As I call it now automatic conditional reflexes. In the casino parking lot Joe demonstrated the highest level of detached awareness that the Samurai used and this is what we also teach to our black belts. Joe and Rick had it already! They came to classes to have fun and to help other students.

Why do students start martial art classes and why do they stay?

Over the years many of my peers and martial art teachers have indicated to me the many different reasons that their students gave for wanting to study the martial arts. Often, they started for one reason then stayed for other reasons

Some reasons they started classes and stayed

1. A student wanted self-defense skills in response to physical and mental abuse that she had received. This student stayed after learning effective self-defense because she wanted to become a teacher so she could help others.
2. One student wanted to learn the esoteric oriental martial art secrets that he had read about. This student stayed after learning the practical arts of self-defense and stayed to learn the higher-level healing arts. The secrets were advanced arts and were taught when the teacher found the right time to teach them to him.
3. Another student just wanted to take classes with her spouse and learn something new together. They stayed and ended up enjoying teaching kids' classes.
4. A few observers joined an introductory class and were watching the students having fun. These new students said that it was the positive and exciting feeling they had felt walking on to the mat for the first time that caused them to come back to class.
5. Many students said that they wanted to be in better physical shape. They sometimes stayed because the physical and mental conditioning made them motivated to exercise more.

I want to continue my study of oriental philosophy and learn Japanese martial arts. Another reason I started martial arts was also job related. I needed to survive working at a violent locked state adult psychiatric hospital and I found a soft style Jujitsu system that was a perfect match for the job. I never had to hurt a patient and I was fortunately never seriously injured after 15 years in this and related occupations. I stayed in the martial arts since 1981 to (at the time of this edit in 2024) help perpetuate this system. I am very grateful for all those people who taught my teachers, for my teachers, my peers and our students who help make my life so much richer and interesting.

Learning from adversity

What can we learn from surviving conflict

Sometimes during the most dangerous events the best in humanity is demonstrated. Self-sacrifice for the sake of saving others is seen as the highest honor. Facing our death sometimes is a path for us to learn what is worth living for.

Fear and the need for survival has benefited society

The motivation of conflict can lead to new technology and discoveries. People must first survive before they can thrive. My Sensei (martial art teacher) told me that without conflict we would have remained in our caves. Great advances in technology and improvements in living standards were created by conflict. Even in ancient times the motivation for food and shelter required us to hunt for food. Harmony between different clans of people was not always possible. The more advanced clan would often dominate the less technologically developed clans. We also find that conflict can cause the advancement in technology and improvements in social structures. With cultural security, inventions

and discoveries established from the art of war can nurture the positive humanitarian arts in peacetime. As an example, the improvement in forging metal for weapons in war time can be used as new technology in improved yields in aquaculture during times of peace.

Violence is sometimes necessary

Another analogy Sensei used was that even a surgeon uses the violence of an incision to heal. Saving the attacker from needlessly killing someone by disabling him is a fair trade off if possible. Using Justly applied violence in self-defense is sometimes necessary to save oneself or someone else.

The Martial Arts and the Military connection Why morality and restraint are needed in military service

The tradition of the discipline and professionalism of the armed service is necessary in order to serve their country honorably. The US soldier must follow the rules of combat and the soldier must follow the chain of command. The US soldier is not to follow certain types of illegal commands. To have an efficient military a code of conduct is followed so as not to endanger the mission themselves, other soldiers or noncombatants. The military chain of command is essential for the health and effectiveness of the corps, or the soldier will face dishonorable discharge or possible incarceration.

Martial arts use military tradition and conduct similar to the soldiers code

Martial Arts also uses some of these codes of honor. Along with discipline it is an efficient way to train students in skilled conditioned reflexes while using the community's legal system as an ethical guide. Our community's legal system regulates what force is allowed for civilian self-defense. Rank in martial arts like the military and it is used to define the level of responsibility accepted. The higher the rank the more care is taken to practice safely with positive encouraging spirit. This is used to promote continued positive growth of the Dojo and of the students.

How to start a martial art school

Martial art instructors must balance the needs of the students with the personal and financial sacrifice that they and their family will make.

1. Opening a school as a business. This is difficult as opening a martial art school as it is very expensive. The school requires the teacher to pay startup costs, outfitting the mat area, business license, insurance and pay a lease on a building. Running a martial art school by yourself usually depends on teaching children as a way to keep the Dojo doors open. If you can teach by lining up 30 kids and teach the class by yourself this can work. In schools like DZR jujitsu it requires volunteer adult students to help teach the kids. If this all goes well and continues to grow in membership the school can help the teacher recoup the financial investment and save for future costs of running the school. I prefer to have a Dojo at my house if possible.

Liability insurance is now more complicated as the AAU (amateur athletic union) a few years ago only insured our style under Judo as the Brazilian style adopted the Jujitsu brand and they need separate insurance company due to their dangerous training and hard style competition. There are many more hoops to jump through if you want to be a not-for-profit organization. Background checks are often required to check for child sexual assault convictions.

The upside to your own school is that you have a set place for your lists of arts and certificates on the wall. You can install mats that you do not need to move at the beginning and at the end of each class. You can also have another business, sell martial art supplies, or have another martial art style sublet

your space to help pay the lease. Another way is teaching at home in a garage or converting a family room to hold classes. A downside to this is a lease can go up in price. Sometimes the owner sells the building or ends the lease.

2. Teaching martial art classes at a city recreation center, fitness center or a church is a great way to grow a school without the expense and financial risk of having a Dojo. You are sharing space with other programs and the cost per student is low. Often there is no cost to the head instructor. As you share the space with other programs you have to store your portable mats or bring them with you. I would call this a school not a Dojo. You need to have a portable Shomen or place to set up pictures of your teacher.

A martial art instructor needs the backing support of his/her peers, advanced teachers and continuing advanced martial art classes. The students' monthly dues should pay for the lease, power and upkeep of the dojo. If the school is successful, the students will provide enough income to pay to send advanced teachers for clinics and to teach the Sensei and to hold advanced black belt classes. When your Sensei stops learning the students cannot progress beyond a certain level. In our system our teachers donate their time to help Sensei keep the school open. I do not know of many Sensei that teach martial arts for a living. It is difficult not to sell out and compromise the importance and the integrity of the martial arts many of us teach and practice.

Moral Code

This is an example of a moral martial art code called the Esoteric principles. This is from the modern hybrid martial art system called DanZan Ryu Jujitsu of the Kodenkan. This document was on a scroll combined with names of the beginning to the intermediate arts of escapes, joint locks, throws and combination arts up to 2nd degree Black Belt level. Considering the cultural context of this document is necessary to keep up with the evolution of modern times. The word His is now interchangeable with Her/Him. Judo is now a sport, and our Jujitsu has adopted the original Judo moral intent with the arts Judo came from. Manliness is the outward courage found in all people of positive character. Connecting the lessons of conflict to the art of living.

**The Esoteric Teachings of
Professor Henry S. Okazaki
Master of the KoDenKan**

**Written by Prof. William Morris,
as interpreted from the Tora No Maki
by Professor Henry S. Okazaki**

Since the fundamental principle acquired through the practice of Jujitsu has been elevated to a finer moral concept called Judo, "The Way of Gentleness," it may well be said that the primary objective of practicing Judo is perfection of character. And to perfect one's character one must be grateful for the abundant blessings of Heaven, Earth, and Nature, as well as for the great love of parents; one must realize his enormous debt to teachers and be ever mindful of his obligations to the general public.

As a member of a family, one's first duty is to be filial to parents, to be helpful and harmonious with one's wife or husband, and to be affectionate to brothers and sisters, so that the family may be a sound, successful, and harmonious unit of the community.

As a member of a nation one must be grateful for the protection which one derives as a citizen; one must guard against self-interest and foster a spirit of social service. One must be discreet in action, yet hold courage in high regard, and strive to cultivate manliness. One must be gentle, modest, polite, and resourceful; never eccentric, but striving always to practice moderation in all things. One must realize that these qualities constitute the secret of the practice of Judo.

Anyone who practices Judo should neither be afraid of the strong nor despise the weak; nor should he act contrary to the strength of his enemy because of the art he has acquired. For example, when a boat is set afloat on water, one man's strength is sufficient to move the boat back and forth. This is only possible because the boat floats; for if, on the other hand, the boat is placed on dry land, the same man's strength is scarcely sufficient to move it. It is necessary, therefore, that the weak should learn this fact with regard to the strong.

The forms and techniques should be remembered as the basic art of Judo. One should never use these arts against anyone without sufficient justification. Therefore, refrain from arrogance and do not despise a small enemy or a weak opponent. Every student of Judo should realize that honesty is the foundation of all virtues. Kindness is the secret of business prosperity. Amiability is the essence of success. Working pleasantly is the mother of health. Strenuous effort and diligence conquer adverse circumstances. Simplicity, fortitude, and manliness are the keys to joy and gladness; and service to humanity is the fountain of mutual existence and common prosperity.

As aptly expressed in the poem "The boughs that bear most hang lowest," one should never forget the virtue of modesty as one attains proficiency in the art of Judo. Do not disdain or regard lightly either literary or military art; each is important and deserves equal cultivation and respect. Within constant motion and change there is tranquillity; and within tranquillity, there is motion and change.

Remember always parental love and one's enormous indebtedness to teachers. Be grateful for the protection of Heaven and Earth. Be a good leader to younger men. To lead younger men well, will in the long run, mean to attain proficiency in the skill of Judo.

Like a drawing in India ink of the whispering of wind in the pines, the secrets of Judo can only be suggested. Only through personal experience can one comprehend the mystic ecstasy of such secrets. It is said of Jujitsu that it would require ten years of practice to win victory over one's self and twenty years to win victory over others.

Whatever the trials or dangers, even "Hell under the upraised sword," remain calm and remember the doctrine imparted to you by your teacher.

A noted verse reads: "For the lotus flower to fall is to rise to the surface."

Only by cultivating a receptive state of mind, without preconceived ideas or thoughts, can one master the secret art of reacting spontaneously and naturally without hesitation and without purposeless resistance.

These are the secrets of Kodenkan into which I have had the honor to initiate you.

Popular stories found in books, oral tradition and movies sometimes show the movement from tragedy to positive character development. This can be a way as inspire others to reach for higher ethical goals that benefit society

In the book Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl chronicled

his experiences as an Auschwitz concentration camp inmate during World War II. Frankl based his very important psychological system on this experience. He discovered that in the horrific conditions found in the concentration camps during WWII people who gave up soon died and that some prisoners actually thrived. This was attributed to the positive feelings that they received while taking care of others in worse conditions than themselves. This gave the caretakers purpose and meaning to their life. Even while facing death, they looked to serve others and this enriched their lives.

A common theme is the self-centered young warrior who looks contest, duels or battle for adventure, wealth and status and then finds his true self or higher nature

In this story we learn about the violent roots of a brutish young man called Takezo.

From a Japanese classic book MUSASHI: An Epic Novel of the Samurai Era by Eiji Yoshikawa and made into the Movie Samurai I, II and III also called the Samurai Trilogy by Hiroshi Inagaki we see the values of Japanese higher moral principles are conveyed through the drama of struggle. Takezo leaves the battlefield (outer conflict) and is interested in testing himself against others. As he gets older, he is immersed in the interpersonal quest for transformation (inner self discovery) and he becomes Miyamoto Musashi. Because of his arrogant antisocial behaviors Takezo is chased by the entire village. He is tricked by a Buddhist priest to give up. Takezo was tied up hanging from a tree by the priest. After the brute's escape he was again tricked into a locked attic at a castle and was forced to stay there. He was told that he would die there. His arrogant old self did die there as he studied the books found in the attic he learns from classical literature. Takezo reevaluates his life and he leaves the attic transformed into a better person now called Miyamoto Musashi. He then starts his journey as a type of self-taught apprentice Samurai seeking improvement of his skills to complete his character and perfect his sword and personal development system.

Reading the non-fiction book "The Book of Five Rings" by Musahsi Miyamoto will add an historical perspective and greatly add to the understanding of this great swordsman, philosopher, and a great teacher.

Zen in the Martial Arts

The books Zen in the Martial Arts by Joe Hyams in 1979 is a very good book for beginner martial artist. An advanced book on this topic is The Zen Way to Martial Arts by Taisen Deshimaru.

Bruce Lee and the TV series Kung Fu and the movie Circle of Iron

Lee wanted to do a tribute to the philosophy behind martial arts. Bruce had trouble with Hollywood producing his movies, so he became a successful actor and director on Hong Kong martial art films. One story goes Bruce made the TV pitch for a TV show titled The Warrior about a martial arts master exploring the wild west. It was picked up as the Kung Fu TV series starring David Carradine. This was poor casting choice showing Hollywood would only use oriental actors in bit parts. They passed off the character that Carradine played as half Chinese. Both the Kung Fu TV shows and Circle of Iron movie are great examples of the attempt to combine ancient philosophy with martial arts.

This was said to be Bruce Lee's last project carried on after his death by his students like Actor James Coburn was called The Silent Flute. Later called Circle of Iron

Some stories are a way of promoting the wellbeing of society over the self

Another story about taming the selfish brutish nature of one of the enlightened warrior is also found in **the movie Sanshiro Sugata** which is the directorial debut of Akira Kurosawa. In this movie the young brute named Sugata falls in with the out of work jujitsu school who are doing whatever it takes to survive. This school wants respect and a government job teaching martial arts. They plan an ambush on the martial art head Instructor of a new system called Judo. The Judo teacher fights off all the attackers. Sugata sees that the Judo instructor is very accomplished. As the Judo's original driver of the vehicle ran off during the fight Sugata he throws off his geta (wooden sandals) and humbles himself to give the Judo instructor a ride on a Jinrikisha a man powered vehicle or known as a rickshaw in China. Sugata gets into trouble with his new Judo school for picking fights in town and for being arrogant about his great physical strength. He jumps into a pond and swears he will not come out and that he will die there unless he is forgiven by his teacher. The school priest taunts him causing him to reevaluate his ruff ways and vows to follow the ethical gentle path of mutual benefit. Sugata has a moment of clarity while in the pond and sees the wisdom of his teacher's lessons. He rejoins the school in time for an important tournament between old Jujitsu and the new Judo. At the end of the competition Sugata won the contest over the Jujitsu Sensei. Sugata showed up for the fallen Jujitsu teacher at his bedside while he was recovering thus demonstrating a higher selfless virtue.

A basic history of an older martial art evolving into modern martial arts

Classical Jujitsu is the father of many arts.

Classical JuJitsu (or gentle technique) is an art using anything to win quickly on the battlefield with the least amount of purposeless resistance. These older systems use ceremonially kata (standardized single person or two persons movements) to train the students' reflexes and to transmit principals in martial art movement. Some Katas demonstrated in public were basic movements and the secret true meanings of the Katas were for advanced students only. Many ancient traditional weapon arts are taught in some systems. The types of unarmed attacks may no longer be the types of attacks that the student will face in today's self-defense needs. Many of the classical schools teachers are excellent practitioners and they effectively transmit the classical martial arts at the same time as teaching modern practical martial art concepts.

Judo as an example of a modern Japanese martial art

At about the turn of the 20th century Judo put fair play and sport into the ancient war arts of Bujutsu (also called Classical Jujitsu). Judo took out the killing arts and taught a style of sport reminiscent to western Roman Greco wrestling. Judo used this as a vehicle to transmit their martial art sport to the common people. This was done after centuries of Japan's isolation from the English speaking and European countries. The sport aspect of Judo was more palatable to westerners and to Japan's political progressive leaders who were wishing to join the rest of the modern world.

Judo (or gentle path) was presented to the public and to the public school system as a way for young men to use contests to test themselves and to practice some of the traditional throws and hold downs within the codified rules. The goal was to channel their natural aggressive competitive energy to complete their character while perfecting their Judo arts. Judo was also taught to prepare the modern young men for the business world while preserving the code of Budo (the way of the warrior) ethics of times past. The Judo taught the ancient arts that include escapes, small joint locks, strikes, killing arts, kicks and self-defense arts to their black belt students. Later Judo was taught to non-Japanese and to women and children.

According to my teachers in the beginning only effortless throws using fingertip control was scored. An outstanding example is comparing Prof. Mifune 10 th Dan in Judo to modern Judo competition found on the internet on you tube.

Today the art of Judo sometimes appears to be win at any cost. My teachers called this Godo or hard way. Some Judo players with arrogant pride were keeping track of how many arms they broke during the competition. This is going against the original intent and the original goal of Dr. Kano, the founder of Judo. This brings dishonor to all martial artists.

Two Judo stories

A good example of an ethical Judo skills story is of a Judo team holding down an out of control airline passenger without seriously hurting him. Another positive of Judo competition story of long ago was in a Judo match the opponent resisted the throw and risked serious injury to himself. The Judoka doing the throw did not want the competitor to hurt himself. The Judo player doing the throw aborted the technique sacrificing himself to the ground to protect his competitor. The Throwing Judoka lost the match but gained the respect of his peers and of his teacher.

Another Judo story comes from my Sensei Prof. LaGue. His Judo teacher was Pierre LaCarr, one time in competition Pierre threw a good full point throw and the judge said” Half point”. Pierre grumbled a little and announced loudly “ok same throw left-handed!” He won the full point and the match.

A story takes place in the early days of Sparks Judo and Jujitsu school of our sparks rowdy Judo competitors. The Judo competition was with the Stead National air guard Judo team. Our guys prepared weeks in advance by practicing very hard for several days then rolling their Judo uniforms up to capture a week’s grime and smell for the competition. They also let their facial hair grow enough to be a bit ruff. At the competition the Stead military Judo team warmed up in unison, clean cut, and with creases in their Judo uniforms. At the same time our Sparks guys were grunting and doing their own separate strange yoga like gyrations as a warmup. This strategy worked well as the Air guard could barley get close enough to our smelly competitors to get a good throw let alone survive the strategic smelly gi grappling wrap technique.

Aikido demonstrations the power of a gentler way

Aikido came from the older and brutal Daito Ryu Aiki Jitsu. Akido was changed to a more spiritual martial art with the goal of peaceful resolution. This will bring both the attacker and the defender into peaceful harmony or as the way of harmonious spirit.

A new Aikido black belt was on the subway when a belligerent drunk was yelling and threatening passengers. The Black belt felt good about himself and thought I will take him out with this or that technique. As the Aikidoist started feeling more and more confident that all his training would finally be tested. An old man interrupted the angry man’s ranting and the old man said, “here you come sit next to me and talk”. The angry man sat down, and the old man was able to calm him down and they were quietly talking to each other about the reasons that the man was so upset. The Aikido black belt was ashamed of himself, and he recognized that the old man had taught him the true spirit of his Aikido. To use respect and compassion whenever possible. To resort to violence as a last resort.

Another story is about an Aikido student who went to a no holds barred martial art competition. He bowed in at the beginning of the match then he immanently bowed off the mat and left the contest area. He was promoted by his instructor for his advanced Aikido technique of efficiently avoiding conflict.

An old man was attacked in a modern parking garage by 6 or so attackers. A highly skilled martial artist pulled up and witnessed the old man appear to float around the attackers dispatching them one by one until the old man was the only one standing. Th martial artist was still in his car amazed by what he just saw. The old man yelled at the martial artist “How about a little help next time!” This was an amazing practical demonstration of the effortless effort of a high-level martial artist.

What is a Hybrid modern martial art system?

I define a hybrid modern martial art system as a system borrowing from an ancient (in this case Jujitsu) oriental martial art system and combining it with other martial art systems old and modern (after the year 1900) and teach many countries traditions and self-defense systems.

These systems use western science and oriental tradition and many other traditions in martial arts to impart knowledge to the students.

This is accomplished by using the best martial arts available regardless of where or when they were created.

A Hybrid System can include a traditional work out uniform. Often English definitions of the arts while familiarizing the westerner with the language traditions and the philosophy of oriental classical martial arts is used.

For the best interest of the student and the best interest of the community.

The hybrid systems included morality or common benefit to teach the best of the world's older systems and to teach modern application to benefit society. Thus, using the arts of war to promote lifesaving or conflict resolution for the common law-abiding citizen is a very worthwhile goal.

A modern Hybrid martial art system should be allowed in a community if the school is providing community service to its citizens. In a for profit martial art school will follow similar legal and ethical guidelines while not putting profit before the students and the community's best interest. This will also earn them the right to teach martial arts.

Modern mixed martial arts (MMA) or cage fighting

Modern Jujitsu currently has a bad reputation with some martial art traditionalists. Jujitsu is now associated with Mixed Martial Arts or MMA. This is a gross level of a US commercially driven cage fighting sport. They are sometimes valued for the bloodied spectacle like the fictitious show of American Big Time wrestling or the all too real gladiator matches in ancient Rome. Many fans enjoy it now because of the many rules that have made it available in the USA. Currently several pages of rules made it much less brutal than its early beginnings of the blood sport of no time limit, no weight divisions and only a couple of rules like no biting and no eye gouging.

Once college wrestlers learned the martial art sport finishing holds the elaborate traditional martial arts were less effective within these current rules.

There are many responsible MMA teachers with true care and concern for their sport and their students. Many teachers want to have a positive effect on their martial art sport, their school and their community. These ethical teachers are valued because they care more for the health and wellbeing of both competitors and the reputation of their sport.

Winning is not the most important thing

Blindly following the teacher of the past and commanding respect

In the old days questioning the instructor was not done. Asking for rank was also not done. Today we tend to use to a less authoritarian style of teaching and encourage critical thinking as we encourage self-discovery for the student. The responsibility of the instructor is for safety first and to demonstrate acceptance and mutual respect. From Prof. Estes

Asking Questions

During instruction at a large the class the frequent questions may not be appropriate. It would be better to write the questions down and ask them at a better time. If safety is an issue, please speak up right away!

Colored Belts or Black Belts being excluded from advanced classes

It is normal for Black Belts to exclude lower rank students from advanced work outs or from their meetings for reasons that may or may not be explained.

Resentment about this is the same as a college student on his first day of class feeling upset because he was not allowed to attend the private meeting of the Professors discussing the running of their department.

Following Sensei's orders without question not so much today

A funny story about Following Sensei's orders without question (as in the old school way) happened in Chico, California. Prof. Fisher told a black belt to "Get dressed"! He had noticed that her Obi (belt for her Judo Gi) was untied and that she needed to tie it before it fell off. A little later they noticed that the black belt had left the mat. She then walked out of the dressing room in her street clothes. Prof. said "Why are you leaving"? She said, "I thought that you asked me to leave" (for a reason that she did not know). Prof. Fisher and the black belts thought it was funny but respected her for not getting upset over a misunderstanding as she knew that Prof. had a good reason to ask her to leave the mat.

Modern Self Defense needs and the appropriate use of force Avoid-Escape-Redirect

Today ending an argument with a mutual punch in the nose then having a drink at the bar together is over. Any minor conflict on the street now can end in a gang attack, stabbing or shots from a firearm. Using excessive force can save your life or ruin it with the unintended death from something like a simple punch, throw or a simple take down. In our DZR system we teach early on with throws and strikes are to be used as a last resort. Self-defense is meant to save you or others from an unprovoked attack or from a life-threatening attack.

The least amount of force should be used from different attacks. Like an attack from a drunk uncle at a wedding or when intervening and controlling a mental ill or a highly emotionally friend or family member requires great verbal and physical conflict resolution skills.

To serve others is more important than only looking towards dominance over others

DZR specialized martial art classes that serve the self, the family, the Dojo, and the community

1. Therapeutic Massage and traditional resuscitation arts from common mat injuries are taught. CPR Basic First aid is required at black belt.
2. A basic understanding of oriental history, philosophy and other oriental traditional healing arts are also needed to have an educated understanding of our traditions.
3. Defense from multiple attackers and defense against modern weapons should be taught.
4. Different types of specialized classes for soldiers, police, and mental health workers are taught.
5. Women's and children self-defense for the non-martial art student is taught.
6. Studies of critical things like philosophy, physiology and psychology is essential to work on completion of character.

The author, Bob Karnes, is a 67 year old student and teacher of DanZan Ryu and DanZan Ryu Zenyo Bujutsu. His journey began in 1981 continues to this day.

Professor Bob Karnes

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